

MICHAEL

(DAGON #365, APA-Q DISTRIBUTION #278)

18 March 1988

WHO

MICHAEL PEREZ, born 9:45 AM EST, Friday 18 March 1988 in Beth Israel Hospital, New York, N. Y., U. S. A. Weight 3.5 kilograms = 7 pounds 12 ounces. Second child of Christopher Perez and Deirdre Boardman Perez.

HOW

There were a great many differences this time, from the birth of Deirdre's and Chris's first child, Anthony, nearly four years ago. Then, Chris had been with the Marines in California, so I had done the standard waiting-room routine for him, and Perdita had actually been in the delivery room to see him born. This time, Chris did his own waiting. I first learned of Michael's birth when I got out of my Friday morning lab, phoned Perdita, and found that Chris had phoned her earlier than morning.

Chris is a security guard at Beth Israel Hospital, an excellent facility on the east side of Manhattan, with which I was somewhat familiar as a regular blood donor there. This meant that, after Michael was born, Chris's colleagues came by to take a look at the baby. It also meant that, when Perdita and I arrived with Anthony on Saturday, we did not have to make elaborate inquiry of the hospital's computer as to which of the two maternity wards Deirdre was in. We just asked the guard at the desk where Chris Perez's wife is. (Besides, the computer was down.)

Something new is apparently being tried at Beth Israel's maternity ward - which is also something very old. When Anthony was born at Brookdale Hospital, he and the other babies were in a nursery, from which they were taken to their mothers' rooms at regular intervals. At Beth Israel, many of the new mothers had their babies with them, in wheeled cribs next to their own beds. (There were also more conventional-type hospital nurseries.) When we arrived, Michael had just gone to sleep, and with occasional stirrings he stayed asleep most of the time we were there. Deirdre's old friend Noreen was already there when we arrived, and Chris and a friend showed up later. Here, again, is a change from the old procedure, where visitors to hospitals were severely restricted in number and in hours. Apparently now more attention is taken to the "bonding" of the new babies, not only with their parents but also with the extended families. It was not long ago that a child of Anthony's age would not have been allowed anywhere near his mother's room in a maternity hospital, but this time he spent as much time with his new brother as the attention span of a three-year-old will allow.

Michael came in right on his due date, and this may have been responsible for his having a somewhat smaller birth weight than Anthony, who was over 4 kilograms. (Anthony came in three days late. Deirdre had been much later than that, and weighed in at 4.4 kilos.) Like Anthony, he was very scant of hair at birth - a thing which had also characterized Deirdre, and which my father tells me was also the case for my brothers and me. (By contrast, the other mother who shared the room, who bore the fine old New York City name of Ng, had a boy with a thick mass of black hair.)

Michael, by a general consensus among the womenfolk, took more after the Perez side of the family than Anthony did. As far as can be told at this early date, he may have a slightly darker complexion. He also had a rash on his cheeks, which we were assured would soon go away. His preferred color for eyes is obviously brown, though he has as little choice in the matter of brown eyes as he does in the matter of Type O blood.

In line with the new "up and out" policy of maternity hospitals, Deirdre and the baby went home two days after he was born. (It had been 3 or 4 in the 1960s, and two weeks in earlier decades.) And there was a new home to go to, too. On the day after Michael was born, Chris and two friends loaded all their furniture out and trucked it over to their new - and necessarily larger - apartment. Their new address is 307 Etna Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y. 11208. This is an apartment in the same building where Chris's parents live. We are going to miss them, but Perdita's long days as a baby-sitting grandma on a semi-permanent basis are now over. We have, as they say, paid our dues.

Anthony, whose birth I reported in DAGON #302, seems to be taking quite well to the changes in the household. A few days before Michael was born, I happened to read in the paper an article about what children worry about. It appears that sibling rivalry is not a major concern in their lives - that children instead worry about much the same things that worry adults - death, injury, and doing poorly at work or school.

His parents have been preparing Anthony for the advent of his new brother, and we have no worries that he will be seriously jealous. And if he feels that nobody has time for Anthony Perez any more, there are four grandparents who can absorb the shock by looking after him. For my own part, I have already made several trips with Anthony to the American Museum of Natural History, about which he is very enthusiastic - and, like practically all children, a great dinosaur fan.

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And now we turn to the next birth in our family, as Katina and Dean are expecting their second child at an April date upon which different physicians have different opinions. In a few days Perdita will drive down for a visit with them, being no longer constrained by the necessities of Anthony's schedule. There is every probability that the next APA-Q Distribution will contain the birth announcement of another grandchild.

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P Great
E Intervals
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A Appears
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